

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 L-03 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 NSAE-00 FAA-00 ARA-06 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8698

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 07213

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, FR, BR, US

SUBJ: AIRCRAFT FIRE SAFETY REPORT (C-SI-6-59681)

REF: STATE 56278

1. ACCIDENT THAT WAS SUBJECT OF REFTEL INVOLVED 707 THAT WAS OWNED AND OPERATED BY BRAZILIAN CARRIER VARIG. AIRCRAFT WAS NOT "FRENCH-OWNED". WHILE EMERGENCY LANDING WAS "SUCCESSFUL" IN THAT AIRCRAFT DID NOT DISINTEGRATE ON IMPACT, AIRCRAFT WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE.

2. WE ARE PERPLEXED BY STATEMENT IN SECOND PARA REFTEL THAT AEROSPATIALE "HAS PREPARED A REPORT ON THIS ACCIDENT", SINCE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE AEROSPATIALE HAD NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH INVESTIGATION OF THIS ACCIDENT AND WOULD LACK FACTS ON WHICH IT COULD BASE A "REPORT". REPORT TO WHICH REFTEL REFERS MAY BE THAT WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR GOF BY SGAC ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION STAFF AND WHICH IS NOW EXPECTED TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE END OF THIS MONTH. IT MAY BE THAT THIS REPORT COULD BE CRITICAL OF BOEING AND OF MATERIALS USED IN INTERIOR OF VARIG 707. IF SO, IT MAY BE THAT AEROSPATIALE COULD HAVE GOTTEN WIND OF THE REPORT AND IS SEEKING TO
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EXPLOIT ITS CONCLUSIONS FOR AEROSPATIALE SALES

PROMOTION EFFORTS IN COMPETITION WITH US CONSTRUCTORS.

3. WE RECALL THAT AT THE TIME THE VARIG ACCIDENT TOUCHED OFF SOME INTEREST IF NOT CONTROVERSY IN US AVIATION TRADE PRESS BECAUSE OF OTHER RECENT ACCIDENTS IN WHICH FIRE ATTACKING AIRCRAFT INTERIORS HAD GENERATED NOXIOUS GASES. UNFORTUNATELY OUR OWN FILES DO NOT ENABLE US DOCUMENT THIS BACKGROUND IN ANY DETAIL.

4. NTSB PARTICIPATED IN GOF INVESTIGATION OF VARIG ACCIDENT AND KAPUSTIN OF NTSB SHOULD BE FULLY INFORMED. SUGGEST KAPUSTIN BE CONTACTED FOR CONFIRMATION OF WHETHER GOF REPORT IS CRITICAL OF MATERIALS USED FOR INTERIOR OF VARIG 707 BECAUSE OF FIRE HAZARD. HE WOULD ALSO PROBABLY BE AWARE OF ANY SEPARATE AEROSPATIALE "REPORT" IF ONE EXISTS.

5. FOLLOWING TURKISH AIRLINES' DC-10 CRASH THERE WERE RUMORS THAT AIRBUS INDUSTRIE (AND NOT AEROSPATIALE, WHICH MERELY ASSEMBLES BUT DOES NOT MARKET A-300 AIRBUS) WAS SEEKING EXPLOIT CONCERN OVER SAFETY DC-10 AIRCRAFT AS MEANS OF PUSHING ITS OWN AIRBUS SALES, BUT THESE RUMORS WERE NOT LONG-LASTING. ONE REASON MAY HAVE BEEN THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS WOULD HAVE BACKFIRED AGAINST FRENCH INTERESTS SINCE FRENCH CARRIER UTA IS DOUGLAS-EQUIPPED AND HAD DC-10'S IN ITS FLEET. SIMILARLY, ANY AIRBUS INDUSTRIE EFFORT TO DENIGRATE BOEING EQUIPMENT COULD BACKFIRE AS NOT BEING IN THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL CARRIER AIR FRANCE, WHICH IS AN ALL-BOEING CARRIER (EXCEPTING SOME OLD CARAVELLES) AND STILL HAS A NUMBER OF 707'S IN ITS FLEET.
RUSH

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